

A DAY WE WILL ALL REMEMBER - - APRIL 2, 1977

Saturday, April 2, 1977, a tornado traveled the full length of the township. It initially touched down near Bond Supply on ML Avenue and progressed in a northeasterly direction finally leaving the township at HJ Avenue and 36th Street. Considerable damage was done by the storm. Many power lines and trees were down.



door  
next

It was but a matter of minutes when volunteers arrived on the scene with everything from chain saws to end-loaders. Through the efforts of various organizations and individuals, the roads were cleared of debris sufficiently within about 2½ hours to enable residents of the area to return to their property to remove possessions from damaged homes and to salvage what they could.

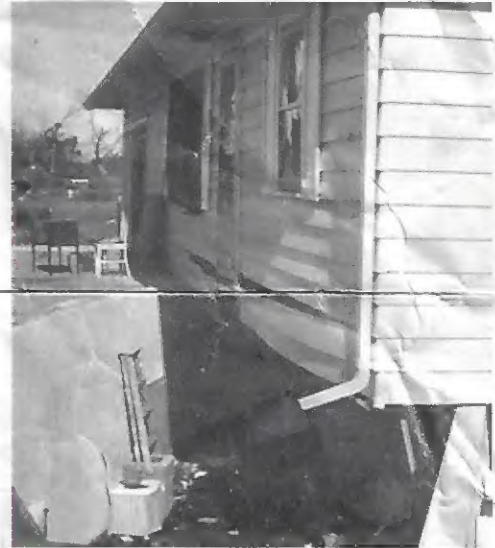
3 houses down east



The only person that was seriously injured was Mr. Max Haase, 9083 E. Main Street, who is expected to return from the hospital April 22. Mr. Haase's home sustained heavy damage from the storm, but through the efforts of his sons, members of the immediate family and friends, the home has been restored for his "home-coming".

Mr. Jim Youngs, County Commissioner, and Mrs. Sally Reames, Comstock Community Center Director, were at the Center Saturday evening after the tornado to take care of immediate needs and to arrange lodging for victims of the storm. Fortunately, residents that were displaced were, in most cases, able to stay with friends or relatives until more permanent arrangements could be made.

It was utterly amazing the number of volunteers that called to offer their assistance including the Comstock Fire Department, the Galesburg Lions Club, members of the Galesburg Fire Department, farmers and residents of the area and the Comstock Jaycees who removed the books from the library at East elementary to prevent damage due to the loss of the roof. The Comstock deputies, along with the regular Sheriff's patrol did an excellent job in patrolling the area to keep out looters and to the best of my knowledge, the only problem that we had was someone that was stealing gas.



The Kalamazoo County Road Commission was on the scene early Monday, April 4, to begin removal of the remainder of the trees and stumps that were in the road right-of-way. They were assisted at that time by members of the Sheriff's Reserve Unit by directing traffic.

On Saturday, April 9, a volunteer clean-up crew was organized to begin cleaning up the debris that was strewn throughout the fields in the devastated area. It was incomprehensible the amount of debris that was picked up from





open farmlands. On some 40 acre fields you could not walk ten feet without running into some type of debris; either two by fours, shingles, siding etc.



A second clean-up was organized for Saturday, April 16. Initially the Comstock Fire Department was going to put on a breakfast for volunteers, but the Kalamazoo County chapter of the American Red Cross offered and paid for the breakfast served at the Comstock Community Center. Red Cross



volunteers came from as far away as Highland to help in the clean-up operation. The Congregational Church of Galesburg provided sandwiches and cakes for lunch for the approximately 75 persons that showed up and the Red Cross distributed them. Among the volunteers were several Girl Scout Troops: leader Doreen Stanley with Troops 653 and 657; leader Sid Shane, Troop 638 and neighborhood chairman, Mary Guiter with Troop 401. Also helping were the youth of the Comstock Community Center.

The April 16 clean-up accomplished what was set out to do. The vacant land was cleaned up so it could be farmed. Township crews are out taking care of the incidental debris that was missed. If there is any property owner that we may have inadvertently missed, we would appreciate it if you would bring it to the attention of the Supervisor. We will be more than happy to render what assistance we can.

On behalf of the Comstock Township Board and myself a sincere appreciation is extended to all those individuals and groups who took time out of their lives to "help their neighbors". You will long be remembered.

Joe Van Bruggen



#### SPECIAL NOTICE

The Comstock Township Board through the Kalamazoo Gazette and other news media and by letter have made an effort to express our sincere appreciation to all those individuals and organizations who have unselfishly offered their services over the past month in helping in the clean up of our township after the recent tornado.

We have noticed that certain groups and organizations may not have been acknowledged publicly, but I can assure you that this was not intentional, and we extend a public apology for any oversight that may have been committed.

Joseph Van Bruggen  
Supervisor